



Community Action Plan for Elba, AL

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

October 2018



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:
<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

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COMMUNITY STORY

Located in south central Alabama's Pea River basin, Elba is a small town of about 3,900 people and is the county seat of Coffee County. When it was first founded in the early 1830s, the town was named Bridgeville in honor of the ferry that was built to cross the Pea River.¹ In 1850 the town was renamed to Bentonville in honor of Col. Thomas H. Benton, who fought in the Creek War of 1813-1814. On December 8th, 1851, the town was renamed yet again to Elba, after the name was drawn from a hat in a lottery.² Historically, the town's proximity to the Pea River has subjected it to frequent flooding, which has hampered Elba's development opportunities and affected many residents.

Over 30 percent of Elba's population lives below the poverty line. In fact, the entire elementary school student body has qualified for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free or low-cost lunches.^{3,4} Many families receive weekly boxes from the food bank to help support themselves. For African American community members, who make up about a third of the population, the poverty figures are even higher, at nearly 40 percent.⁵

In the 1990s, a series of floods devastated downtown businesses, leaving many storefronts vacant.⁶ A new higher levee has provided greater protection and confidence in downtown reinvestment, though residents anticipate that a new Highway 84 bypass could erode recent gains in downtown reinvestment.⁷ Recently, Elba residents have focused on addressing the intersecting challenges of prior flooding, local food insecurity, and economic development through revitalization efforts focusing on downtown.

To address the city's economic stressors and build community in Elba, several local nonprofits and concerned residents have come together on several projects that center on using local foods as an engine of prosperity.



Figure 1. A historic county courthouse sits in the middle of Elba's downtown square, along with a fountain reflecting the town's history as the "City of Flowing Wells."



Figure 2. The space around the Giving Garden includes a colorful mural and a compost system that is attractive and supports educational and volunteer engagement.

¹ Encyclopedia of Alabama. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2414>

² Ibid.

³ U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5 Year Estimate. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>

⁴ Elba Local Foods, Local Places 2017 Application

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5 Year Estimate. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>

⁶ History of Elba city. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090930102033/http://www.elbaalabama.net/miscellaneous/history-of-elba>

⁷ Elba Local Foods, Local Places 2017 Application

For example, as part of a recent project spearheaded by a local nonprofit called Restoration 154/Foundation 154, community members convene at the downtown Giving Garden to plant, cultivate, and harvest fresh produce, all of which is given to a local food bank, a Ministerial Alliance project. Restoration 154/Foundation 154 aims to create 154 projects, which include the garden and a kayaking and canoeing rental service that provides a recreational opportunity. The restoration of the classic Elba Theatre is another of the organization's projects that will jump-start a vibrant new arts scene in Elba.⁸

Restoration 154/Foundation 154 and community partners such as Mayim Farm, hope to expand on the existing Giving Garden by creating a new downtown farmers market that would provide local farmers an opportunity to sell their produce directly to residents and increase foot traffic downtown, further driving revitalization. The proposed farmers market already has the support of many institutions within the city, including the city council, Elba Housing Authority, and the local Chamber of Commerce.

With these goals in mind, Greg Lolley of Mayim Farm requested technical assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program in 2017 to engage residents and develop an action plan for promoting the local food system and a more healthy, walkable, economically vibrant community. The Local Foods, Local Places program supports local community-driven efforts to create:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Delta

Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Greg Lolley**, Mayim Farm
- **Carole Lolley**, Mayim Farm
- **Gavin Mauldin**, Alabama Cooperative Extension
- **Sandy Bynum**, Chamber of Commerce
- **Chelsea Cooper**, Elba Giving Garden
- **Justin Maddox**, Restoration154/Foundation154
- **Philip Box**, Restoration154/Foundation154

Figure 3 – Elba Steering Committee Members

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Michelle Madeley**, EPA Office of Community Revitalization
- **John Foster**, EPA Office of Community Revitalization
- **Sheryl Good**, EPA Region 4
- **Denise Tennessee**, EPA Region 4
- **Ron Batcher**, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
- **David Guthrie**, CDC
- **Tom Todt**, U.S. Small Business Administration Alabama District Office
- **Corey Kirkland**, Alabama Department of Public Health

Figure 4 -- Technical Assistance Team

⁸ Elba Local Foods, Local Places 2017 Application

Regional Authority. Elba was one of 16 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2018.

After being selected, Elba formed a Local Foods, Local Places steering committee, which planned for the technical assistance. The committee is comprised of a variety of community partners (Figure 3). They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of multiple federal and state agency partners (Figure 4). The steering committee and technical assistance team together planned for a community workshop that would engage the public and help Elba determine how to develop a downtown farmers market, repurpose a vacant downtown building for a new Makers Market for local artisans and food entrepreneurs, and strengthen the ability of Elba’s primary food bank to better serve the community.

The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the outcome: a community action plan to achieve Elba’s goals.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 5 below. The plan phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee to establish the workshop goals, agenda, logistics, and stakeholder invitation lists. The convening phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The act phase includes three follow up conference calls as well as process reporting and documentation. The community workshop was held over a two-day period from September 18 to 19, and the activities those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is provided in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E**, and general references in **Appendix F**.

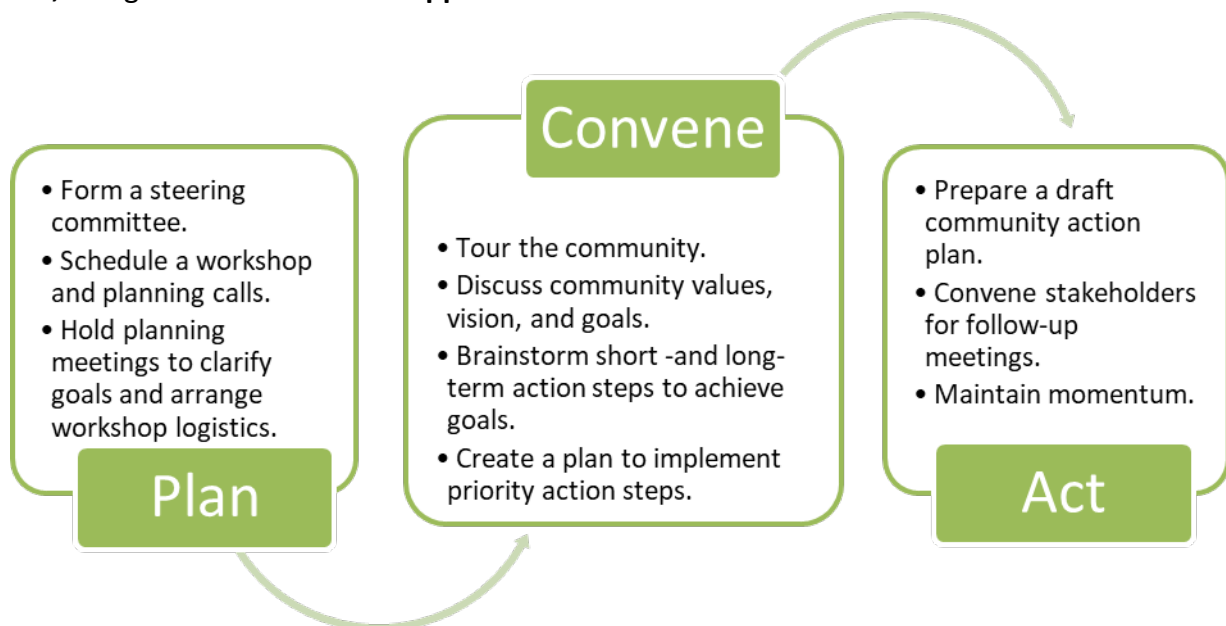


Figure 5. Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

COMMUNITY TOUR

The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee organized a tour of key sites in downtown Elba and the surrounding area for the technical assistance team. The purpose of the tour is to provide federal and state partners a tangible sense of what is going on in the community related to the local food system and community revitalization efforts. Tour participants have an opportunity to engage directly with various stakeholders such as business owners they meet along the way. Finally, the tour can help the steering committee see their community with a fresh perspective and think about what the community's key assets are, what could use some improvement, and how connected or disconnected key locations are.

The tour began with a lunch at the Rabbit Hole, a popular, locally owned Elba restaurant outfitted with festive decorations that

includes a large outdoor space right on the downtown square. The outside space includes a stage for live music, outdoor seating, eclectic outdoor decorations, and a colorful mural depicting many of Elba's natural, built, and economic assets. According to the steering committee, the community came together to paint the mural in an act of community building and demonstration of civic pride. The lunch at the Rabbit Hole offered the steering committee members and partners an opportunity to meet and get to know each other.

Following lunch, Sandy Bynum, Director of the Elba Chamber of Commerce, led a downtown walking tour. The group observed and learned about several downtown revitalization projects, such as the Restoration 154 renovation of the Elba Theater on the downtown square and how it will help transform downtown as a community venue and gathering space. The day of the tour, the theater façade had just been painted, visibly signaling investment in downtown Elba. The downtown square is charming and has a mix of businesses,



Figure 6. The Rabbit Hole is a downtown restaurant with a colorful mural and unique fence that create an artistic, unique outdoor space.



Figure 7. Elba's downtown square has a mix of unique buildings, including the theater, which is undergoing renovations (the theater is on the right).

although it also includes several vacant storefronts. One of those vacant storefronts is a prime building space that the local steering committee is working to transform into a Makers Market for artisans and food entrepreneurs. When realized, it would provide a production space and a retail outlet for these entrepreneurs and encourage increased downtown pedestrian and retail activity.

The group also visited a new pocket park on the southwest corner of the downtown square. It was completed after the removal of a vacant building on the site and built with materials that can easily be removed if a developer wants to build on the site in the future. During the tour, several steering committee members described how the park has beautified the downtown block and how some high school students now pose for graduation pictures there.

Just north of the downtown square, Tiger Town Park is a new investment, which includes a children's spray pad and benches. It is located adjacent to the original front façade of the old Elba High School, which was destroyed in the 1990 flood. After the flood the high school was rebuilt outside of the downtown. The old high school façade was preserved as a reminder of the city's history. The city plans further improvements, such as a new dog park next to Tiger Town Park, reinforcing it as a recreational destination for families.

Another block off the square, the Giving Garden is a productive, community-oriented use on an undevelopable lot



Figure 8. Downtown Elba's pocket park transformed one corner of the square.



Figure 9. Tiger Town Park is a new recreational amenity for Elba.



Figure 10. The Giving Garden has transformed a vacant lot into a productive, educational, local food-based community asset.

that the Federal Emergency Management Agency purchased in a buy-out following the 1990 flood. The site is next to the levee and two unoccupied historic buildings, the old Coffee County Jail and the historic home where former Alabama Governor Folsom was born. The Giving Garden includes a high tunnel for season extension, several raised beds that were bursting with late season crops on the tour, and an outdoor learning center, which is a small wooden structure. The garden and the buildings sit in the shadow of the nearby 41-foot-high levee.

The group then embarked on a driving tour to see additional sites outside of downtown Elba, including several of the manufacturers located in the city, the high school, the Pea River Outdoors kayaking outfitter, and the Coffee County Farmers Cooperative, which are all key city and regional assets.

VISION AND VALUES

During the workshop's first session on the evening of September 18th, Greg Lolley of Mayim Farm welcomed attendees and described the background and context for Local Foods, Local Places in Elba. Mayor Murdock also welcomed participants and presented his vision for Elba's future, in which Elba is distinguished as a unique community. After opening remarks, the meeting facilitators introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation. The team highlighted the elements and benefits of a local food system and shared examples of other communities pursuing goals like those in Elba.

The facilitation team then led attendees through an exercise designed to bring up core values of the community (Figure 11). Participants completed the statements, "I believe that Elba..." and "I believe that Elba's local food system..." The exercise allowed participants to reflect on and share their beliefs with the group, which highlighted many of the common perspectives and aspirations among Elba residents. Many residents expressed optimism about

I believe that Elba...

- Rocks!
- Has huge reserves of creativity, resilience, and energy.
- Has **potential**.
- Needs more business downtown.
- Is on the brink of seeing some great results from efforts put forth since our setbacks due to the floods.

I believe that Elba's local food system...

- Can be a food culture.
- Needs improvement.
- Needs to be improved with a farmers market and sharing excess produce with others.
- Could better serve the community if it becomes more organized and more people were actively involved.
- Does not best serve the demographics of its citizens.
- Can be more accessible.

Figure 11. During a workshop exercise, participants completed the statements "I believe that Elba..." and "I believe that Elba's local food system..." Some of thoughts shared during this exercise are shown above, reflecting the ideas that helped frame the workshop's action planning sessions on day two.

ACTION PLAN

The public input, group exercises, brainstorming, and discussions were important steps in the development of Elba's Local Foods, Local Places action plan. The action plan is organized around the three goals identified by the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee and validated by additional workshop participants. The following action plan outline lists each goal, followed by tables providing details for each goal that clarify the purpose of each action, timeline for completion, roles, and possible sources of support and funding. The goals and supporting actions are listed below. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.

1. Goal 1 – Establish a downtown farmers market with events and programming, so that local foods and arts further enliven downtown.
 - *Action 1.1* – Establish an advisory board for the Farmers Market and Makers Market and invite additional community champions to join the board.
 - *Action 1.2* – Determine the location and schedule for the farmers market and develop a written plan for addressing other details of the market.
 - *Action 1.3* – Identify producers and other vendors and invite them to participate in the 2019 farmers market season.
 - *Action 1.4* – Establish a calendar for the farmers market, including events to activate and enliven the market.
 - *Action 1.5* – Apply for a farmers market promotion grant to ensure consistent and reliable management and marketing support for the market, vendors, and customers.
2. Goal 2 – Coordinate community support for the Food Bank and determine the feasibility of a mobile feeding unit.
 - *Action 2.1* – Create a “Jobs Board” with peel-off job postings at the Giving Garden and a mobile version to rotate at different locations off-site.
 - *Action 2.2* – Develop a hot meal program information package and reach out to local churches and others to broaden support for the hot meals program.
 - *Action 2.3* – Host an annual “Elba Youth Food Drive Day” at multiple sites, focusing on local grocery store sites.
 - *Action 2.4* – Acquire a delivery vehicle and modify a trailer to serve as “mobile food units” for delivering hot meals and fresh produce.
3. Goal 3 – Develop a strategy for creating a Makers Market on Elba's downtown square.
 - *Action 3.1* – Secure a spot on the Elba City Council agenda and prepare a pitch about the Makers Market using data about downtown.
 - *Action 3.2* – Invite makers to participate using Chamber of Commerce's list, in an initial pop-up for the December 1st Christmas Bazaar.
 - *Action 3.3* – Host the Christmas Bazaar in December 2018: “Possibilities Event.”
 - *Action 3.4* – Identify the operating structure of the Makers Market.

GOAL 1: Establish a downtown farmers market with events and programming, so that local foods and arts further enliven downtown.

Elba’s Giving Garden hosted a pop-up farmers market in 2017, and organizers of that event hope to develop a more consistent farmers market presence in Elba. A permanent farmers market will attract a reliable customer base, which, in turn, will encourage increased vendor participation. Several potential sites for the farmers market are under consideration, including:

- The grassy lot or parking lot adjacent to the Giving Garden (both city-owned)
- County building parking strips or the shaded grassy open space on the downtown square (county owned).

The proposed market’s downtown proximity would help to improve access to locally grown produce and to enliven the downtown on market days.

The proposed new market could share common challenges faced by many burgeoning farmers markets, including attracting a critical mass of both customers and growers so both groups feel that it is worthwhile to attend, and ensuring that that management and operations run smoothly. This goal is focused on enabling the farmers market in Elba to succeed and establishing a market that is distinct from, and not conflicting with, other regional farmers markets, such as the market in the nearby city of Enterprise. The supporting actions for this goal build on existing initiatives and create a strong foundation for a well-defined leadership team and organizational structure that would help the market flourish.

Action 1.1: Establish an advisory board for the Farmers Market and Makers Market and invite additional community champions to join the board.	
What this is and why it is important	Having a responsible decision-making body provides accountability and a clear governance structure while providing oversight and support to a market manager who takes care of day-to-day operations. The board sets direction, provides oversight, and can plan for market implementation. Additionally, the market board would make decisions on vendor diversity (e.g., percentage of produce versus artisan vendors, number of bona fide local producers marketing their own products, and the number of organic versus conventionally grown products available). The board would also decide on insurance and liability coverage and determine if the city’s coverage applies, especially if the market is located on county property.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board is established and meets regularly. • An announcement is made to vendors and producers. • Initial rules are established and shared with interested vendors.
Timeframe	Within 30 days, Greg Lolley will work with Patty Johnson (Coffee Shop) to set up an initial meeting to discuss the December Market/Bazaar
Lead	Greg Lolley, Mayim Farm
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members • The city of Elba

Action 1.1: Establish an advisory board for the Farmers Market and Makers Market and invite additional community champions to join the board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers and vendors • Downtown businesses • School representative • Chamber of Commerce • Jamie Hudson, Future Farmers of America • Patty Johnson, Coffee House
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	TBD

Action 1.2: Determine the location and schedule for the farmers market and develop a written plan for addressing other details of the market.

What this is and why it is important	<p>The timing and location of the market are critical elements that can influence market customers’ interest in shopping. Selecting the appropriate time for people who live, work, visit, and attend school in Elba and other potential customers provides a solid foundation for vendors to estimate sales. Ideally the market can coincide with other downtown activities, drawing even more people in. The timing should also benefit other downtown businesses promoting more foot-traffic from market-goers.</p> <p>Location also plays a significant role in market success. Several possible locations in and near downtown were proposed at the workshop. The steering committee could consider the potential pros and cons of each for attracting customers, (e.g., sufficient vendor loading areas, walkability, attractiveness, bathroom amenities). Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Downtown Square (most centrally-located) ○ Giving Garden (more shade and space) ○ Tiger Town Park (family friendly) – Post-workshop discussions determined this to be the least preferred, narrowing the choices to the previous two options.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location, day, and time for the market is set, and the Enterprise Market calendar is referenced. • A draft calendar is in place and available to share with potential vendors.
Timeframe	Board approved calendar by January 1, 2019
Lead	Market board
Supporting cast	Churches School

Action 1.2: Determine the location and schedule for the farmers market and develop a written plan for addressing other details of the market.

Costs and/or resources needed	Time and research
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 1.3: Identify producers and other vendors and invite them to participate in the 2019 farmers market season.

What this is and why it is important	Committed vendors are the core of a consistent, reliable farmers market. While programming and events are important to enlivening the market, the backbone of the market is local farmers selling locally grown food, or local artisans selling locally made crafts. Recruiting vendors takes time and dedicated outreach efforts. Providing information on market rules and the market schedule will also help vendors know what to expect and demonstrate organization and reliability to potential vendors.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of vendors, including producers and makers, is completed. • Invitations to vendors are sent, and follow-up calls are conducted. • A preliminary list of interested and ready-to-commit vendors is created.
Timeframe	By December 1, 2018
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gavin Mauldin, Alabama Cooperative Extension (outreach to producers) • Sandy Bynum, Chamber of Commerce (outreach to makers)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market board • Sandy Bynum, Chamber of Commerce
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Mailing costs
Possible funding sources	Extension Office can cover mailing costs

Action 1.4: Establish a calendar for the farmers market, including events to activate and enliven the market.

What this is and why it is important	In addition to selecting the market’s location, date, and time (Action 1.3), developing programming and varied special events for different market dates can enhance marketing and encourage more diverse customer traffic. For example, coordinating a Giving Garden work day in conjunction with a market day is a great way to build community support for both the garden and market and create a family-friendly event.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market programming calendar is complete and shared. • Customer counts.

Action 1.4: Establish a calendar for the farmers market, including events to activate and enliven the market.

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 13, 2018, planting day at the Giving Garden, is a pilot for programming January 2019 for calendar
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Lolley, Mayim Farm Sandy Bynum, Chamber of Commerce
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Board Amy, with the city of Elba (maintains calendar)
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	No costs

Action 1.5: Apply for a farmers market promotion grant to ensure consistent and reliable management and marketing support for the market, vendors, and customers.

What this is and why it is important	A dedicated market board enables stronger governance and oversight of a paid full-time market manager who can be responsible day-to-day market operations. The manager’s role is critical on market days for setting up and tearing down, cleaning, communicating with customers and vendors, and troubleshooting problems. Additionally, the manager can develop a marketing strategy, manage outreach to interested vendors, maintain operational records, enforces rules, and perform other duties as needed. The manager position might also be a blended role, supporting other local programs such as the Main Street program, the Makers Market, and other projects.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job description and budget are created for the position. Grant is received (or city commits to providing a stipend).
Timeframe	To be determined, dependent on grant deadlines (May 2019 deadline)
Lead	Justin Maddox, Restoration 154/Foundation 154
Supporting cast	Local Foods, Local Places steering committee
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Local Food Promotion Program USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program

Additional actions proposed:

- Open the market! Plan events, seasonal activities. Specific activities included:
 - Let the River Feed Us—have a tasting of foods grown along the river.
 - Town Totem Poles= interpretative painted poles for food and experiences.
 - Children’s Food Fest: focused on youth, health, and fun activities.
 - Have our first Farmers Market/El Camino Boogie by July 2019.

- Develop signage and advertise widely – announce upcoming farmers market dates in October, November, and December with great branding, advertising on web, TV, radio, and word-of-mouth by Friday, Sept. 28, 2018.
- Develop a sustainability plan.
- Prep land for use to build out kiosks if needed.

Goal 2: Coordinate community support for the Food Bank and determine the feasibility of a mobile feeding unit.

Elba’s existing food bank programs have been successful in meeting the needs of those who depend on the food preparation and delivery services it offers. However, local food bank leaders seek to do more to improve services and more equitably distribute the many tasks that volunteers work tirelessly to complete. The volunteers commit a significant level of effort and time to make the program succeed. The actions supporting this goal address these concerns, focusing on increasing the number of volunteers actively participating with the Food Bank and the Giving Garden, obtaining additional equipment needed to maintain effective meal delivery, and generating community interest through a city-wide food drive involving Elba youth.

By bringing in more residents to volunteer, especially those who stand to benefit directly from the Food Bank, the goal provides an opportunity to foster a stronger volunteer culture within Elba. Outreach to youth and local churches is a key way to engage with potential new volunteers. With enough volunteers available and the right equipment in place, the food bank and meal delivery programs can help even more people in need within the region.

Action 2.1: Create a “Jobs Board” with peel-off job postings at the Giving Garden and a mobile version to rotate at different locations off-site.	
What this is and why it is important	A “Jobs Board” would help connect prospective volunteers to volunteer jobs/activities at the Giving Garden. A physical board installed onsite at the garden also can serve as a gathering point for volunteers to socialize and share information and find or post potential volunteer activities and mentoring or training opportunities. It can also bring information about outside volunteer activities to the garden. A mobile “Jobs Easel” can take Giving Garden and other volunteer job opportunities out into the community to reach people not aware or currently connected to the Giving Garden. For example, the board could travel to a different church each week to connect with different parts of the community.
Measures of success	Number of new garden volunteers who actively follow through on specific garden jobs
Timeframe	By September 30
Lead	Chelsea Cooper, Elba Giving Garden

Action 2.1: Create a “Jobs Board” with peel-off job postings at the Giving Garden and a mobile version to rotate at different locations off-site.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamie Hudson, Future Farmers of America • Phillip Box, Church of Christ • Cathy Bowsman & Max (farmers) • Michael Woodem (gardening expert) • Need volunteers
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and outreach to develop job list • Materials to make the physical board or easel • A sign maker to design the decorative elements of the board • Peel off components (e.g., X-treme Post-it Notes which are more weather proof)
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local hardware store donation for supplies • Other local funding source for supplies (e.g., churches, civic groups, local businesses) • Sign construction (e.g., high school construction tech-class, donated labor by local contractor)

Action 2.2: Develop a hot meal program information package and reach out to local churches and others to broaden support for the hot meals program.

What this is and why it is important	<p>The hot meal program in Elba fills the critical role within the community of providing meals to people in need. It takes a major effort on the part of a small number of volunteers to make the hot meal program work, and it is effective because of their commitment, time, and dedication. Because they manage to deliver meals on a regular basis, the need for additional volunteers and resources to sustain the program may not be apparent. This action will help recruit additional volunteers to support the food bank and hot meals program. Volunteer recruitment efforts will target the network of local churches and other channels such as local civic groups. It will establish dedicated church or civic group liaisons to improve communications and coordination on all aspects of improving access to healthy foods and more active healthy lifestyles in Elba.</p>
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Action 2.2: Develop a hot meal program information package and reach out to local churches and others to broaden support for the hot meals program.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional three to four volunteers for three hot meal delivery routes. • Number of church announcements, postings, and bulletins with sufficient lead time ahead of project dates • List of substitute volunteers who can fill in for volunteers calling in sick, etc. • Published work schedule • Volunteer pledge card for prospective volunteers to fill out and place in church offering plates or other collection mechanisms • Four to five participating churches (out of twelve) in Elba. • Joint-effort projects used to generate “First Thursday” interest • Outreach to Rotary Club, Lions club, and other civic organizations • Designated church and civic organization liaisons to help recruit volunteers from within their church or organization
Timeframe	October 30, 2018
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillip Box, Church of Christ • Valorie McGuire
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elba Ministerial Alliance • Church liaisons
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Supplies (volunteer cards, information packet)
Possible funding sources	Local churches

Action 2.3: Host an annual “Elba Youth Food Drive Day” at multiple sites, focusing on local grocery store sites.

What this is and why it is important	<p>An annual one-day youth food drive would create positive local energy, encourage greater youth participation, and increase awareness and appreciation of the hot meals program, the Giving Garden, local healthy food options, healthy lifestyle activities, and community-building more generally. To ensure a more successful youth food drive, event planners should research best practices and lessons learned from other food drives and the previous Elba “Food Challenge.” Workshop participants noted that they could potentially coordinate with the local school, which also hosts a food drive.</p>
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Action 2.3: Host an annual “Elba Youth Food Drive Day” at multiple sites, focusing on local grocery store sites.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of church youth groups from congregations in the Ministerial Alliance (12) • Youth food drive committee members identified to plan food drive and set measures to show improve food drive results. • Number of youth recruited to participate in food drive.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Food Drive Date: Monday June 3, 2019 (which is the 154th day of the year).
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Smith, Associate Pastor, Church of Christ
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church liaisons • Food bank representatives • Partners (e.g., local grocery stores, restaurants, etc.)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer time • Signage • Vans/trailers, gas • Supplies
Possible funding sources	TBD

Action 2.4: Acquire a delivery vehicle and modify a trailer to serve as “mobile food units” for delivering hot meals and fresh produce.

What this is and why it is important	<p>Similar to having volunteers support the hot meal program in Elba (Action 2.2), matching program needs with equipment to meet those needs helps the program succeed. The program’s volunteers are its backbone, but they can’t do their jobs without the right equipment. The challenge is to determine the scope of equipment needs up front then find available equipment that meets those needs. Based on some leg work already completed, an ideal piece of equipment might be a small food delivery panel van that is easier for volunteers to drive than larger delivery trucks.</p> <p>In addition to the delivery vehicle, the action includes possibly retrofitting a trailer that can keep food cold or hot. Scoping options should also consider the equipment’s ability to carry people, store things in addition to food, and be used in other ways at events.</p> <p>Before acquiring equipment, other factors to consider include who would own title, cover insurance, and perform maintenance, and what support it can provide to other projects such as the Giving Garden.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential sources of a delivery truck contacted. • Delivery truck acquired. • Existing trailer located and retrofitted.

Action 2.4: Acquire a delivery vehicle and modify a trailer to serve as “mobile food units” for delivering hot meals and fresh produce.

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact delivery truck sources by December 2018. • Retrofit truck by February 2019. • Locate missing trailer by February 2019. • Retrofit trailer by February 2019. • Acquire stand-alone unit for Makers Mart by February 2019.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillip Box, Church of Christ
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben E. Keith (potential equipment source) • Kelly’s Foods (potential equipment source) • Dorsey Trailer (potential equipment source) • Jim Cook Ford • Jim Cook Chevy • Church and Pea River Outdoors (vehicle maintenance) • Gavin Mauldin, Alabama Cooperative Extension (can help locate missing trailer)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of a vehicle (if not donated) • Cost of trailer retrofit (if not donated) • Cost of stand-alone unit (if not donated) • Time invested in pursuing options • Maintenance costs can be covered by the Church of Christ and Pea River Outdoors’ regular maintenance routines
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses that can donate equipment

Additional Actions Proposed

- Appoint a two-person team to report to local churches and organizations on the current work of food bank/garden/and hot meal programs and promote support for mobile feeding units.
- Have great proposals ready by end of October to find money to purchase four mobile feeding units.
- Host an “Outside-In” review of food bank logistics Spring/May 2019.
- Involve new volunteers, especially among recipients of food bank services.
- Involve children in food drive and community service to increase participation.
- Have informational material or a meeting to educate community of need and hopefully increase involvement in the food bank.
- Hold a community outreach town hall meeting to discuss the current status and future of the food bank.
- Conduct a food bank fundraiser.
- Increase volunteers for the Giving Garden.
- Create a to-do list for Giving Garden volunteers.
- Have Master Gardeners come up with a list of volunteer activities at the Giving Garden.

Goal 3: Develop a strategy for creating a Makers Market on Elba’s downtown square.

Elba is a community with many entrepreneurs, including bakers, artisans, musicians, and more. A proposed new Elba Makers Market offers an opportunity to bring this talent together in one central place to create a more vibrant food, arts, and music scene that can make Elba a unique destination regionally. The Makers Market could activate the downtown square and become a destination for Elba residents as well. Depending on how it is designed, it can serve as a common space for community members to gather, a supportive space for artisans to create, a workspace for entrepreneurs to build their businesses, and a civic place that fosters a sense of community pride. The Makers Market would breathe new life into a currently vacant downtown building and reinforce other downtown revitalization efforts such as the ongoing restoration of the Elba Theater.

Aside from the physical structure, the Makers Market could also provide incubator-type support to help local entrepreneurs. Supporting services might include training on business basics such as accounting, finance, small business laws, management, marketing, and operations. The Makers Market, with supportive services for new business owners, could lead to alumni tenants opening their own independent locations nearby and mentoring new tenants.

Action 3.1: Secure a spot on the Elba City Council agenda and prepare a pitch about the Makers Market using data about downtown.	
What this is and why it is important	Presenting the idea and plan of the Makers Market to the city council solidifies the concept of a Makers Market in a vacant downtown building. The presentation and outreach would outreach educate the community and region on its potential use, its role in the community, and associated benefits. The outreach can foster community support for the Makers Market, which will generate the political enthusiasm needed for to approve it. Some other key issues to resolve include resolving insurance coverage and costs, both in the short- and long-term.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City council’s permission for December event obtained • City council’s approval on official record • Insurance costs are covered • ERA has building – creating an open-ended agreement for its use
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By October 2018 for December event (complete) • By March 2019 for longer-term agreement
Lead	Farmers Market Advisory Board (downtown Makers Advisory Board)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City council and mayor • Chelsea Cooper, Elba Giving Garden (to investigate insurance)
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.2: Invite makers to participate using Chamber of Commerce’s list, in an initial pop-up for the December 1st Christmas Bazaar.

What this is and why it is important	Inviting participants through a pop-up event will serve to activate the space, advertise the Makers Market and its potential, and allow vendors and participants to get a sense for the space. The pop-up event will physically bring people downtown, further catalyzing economic development in the downtown area. It will also bring people together to further discuss how they or other residents could get involved, potentially catalyzing new ideas and participation. This event will not only be a vibrant and unique event for the community, but it will give the advisory board a sense of the formalized and committed list of vendors and participants in the market. The pop-up market could also be advertised outside of Elba, bringing in regional community members.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email blast sent • Follow up calls conducted • Info meeting/convening on potential vendors occurs
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations sent by mid-October • List of vendors by early November • Meeting in mid-November
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandy Bynum, Chamber of Commerce • Greg Lolley, Mayim Farm
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurie, Housing Authority (has a list) • Identify Chamber or city intern to assist • Farmers Market/Downtown Makers Advisory Board • Troy University • Arts Alliance/Piney Woods Art Festival
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.3: Host the Christmas Bazaar in December 2018: “Possibilities Event.”

What this is and why it is important	The Christmas Bazaar would allow the opportunity for Elba residents to build on something that the community already knows about, activating the Makers Market space downtown through a well-attended yearly event. This new location would refresh the event, which could potentially pull in new residents and generate new excitement. The goal would need cooperation from the Coffeehouse, which previously hosted the event. Hosting this event in the Makers Market would also allow for more space for vendors.
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Action 3.3: Host the Christmas Bazaar in December 2018: “Possibilities Event.”	
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-10 vendors committed for Christmas Bazaar • Participation extended to music, school groups, and other participating groups • Design concepts presented
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Parade scheduled for December 3rd • Conduct on the Saturday before or after the parade
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covenant Church/Coffeehouse leads the Bazaar • Downtown Market Advisory Council to support
Supporting cast	City council and mayor
Costs and/or resources needed	Cost needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting • Restrooms • Chicken-wire • Wood • Promotional materials Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal fee for vendors/donated from customers
Possible funding sources	TBD

Action 3.4: Identify the operating structure of the Makers Market.	
What this is and why it is important	Identifying and formalizing the operating structure for the Makers Market is important for its success. This action item includes agreeing on and formalizing the fees for vendors, identifying the managers, understanding and disseminating information on the sales tax, obtaining businesses licensing, determining the balance of vendors, and determining the layout of the building event spaces and vendor spaces, which will be multi-purpose. This action is important for business-operation and legal purposes and creates a point of contact for vendors or customers with questions. It creates clarity and transparency around the Makers Market and identifies an entity or organization that is responsible for this action.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles/rules established • Makers Market operations begin, including fundraising and outfitting the building
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After December 2018 timeframe • Use Bazaar kick-off and early date • Using 2019 to establish
Lead	Greg Lolley and the Downtown Makers Advisory Board
Supporting cast	Sandy Bynum and the Elba Chamber of Commerce

Action 3.4: Identify the operating structure of the Makers Market.	
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time ○ Cost of running building, including possible generator and heating/cooling • Resources: Need to identify grant and fee structure, e.g., flat fee and/or percentage
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD • USDA Agricultural Marketing Service – Ron Batcher provides free design services

Additional Actions Proposed:

- Develop an oral history of Elba Floods (those who went through high school) with AL 200th Anniversary Celebration.
- Construct booths within the vacant building for the markets market.
- Implement application process for vendors.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

In the first weeks after the workshop, work was already underway in Elba to begin implementation of the action plan.

- The City Council approved usage of the Makers Market building for the Christmas Bazaar.
- The Giving Garden Planting Day and Farmers Market on Oct. 13th provided an opportunity to demonstrate what will come in 2019.
- The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs awarded the city of Elba a \$450,000 grant for downtown revitalization. The city applied in partnership with Restoration 154 and the Chamber of Commerce. To obtain the Community Development Block Grant, Elba had to demonstrate a local match and commitment, so the city is also contributing \$75,000 and Restoration 154 is putting in \$125,000, resulting in \$650,000 of investment in historic downtown Elba. The money will support façade improvements for storefronts on the square, and a significant portion of the funds are dedicated to restoring the Elba Theater to operational condition.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix B – Workshop Sign-in Sheets
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Community Data Profile
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References